

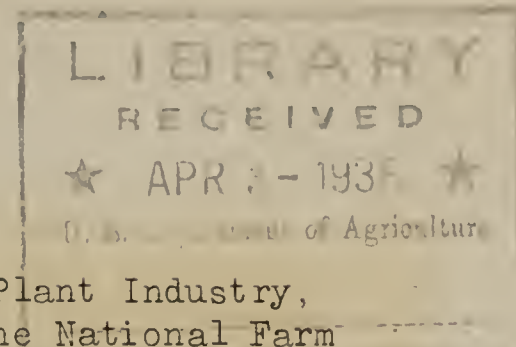
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THE GARDEN CALENDAR



A radio discussion by W. R. Beattie, Bureau of Plant Industry, delivered in the Department of Agriculture period of the National Farm and Home Hour, broadcast by a network of 50 associate NBC radio stations, Wednesday, March 11, 1936.

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Hello folks. Well I bragged a little too soon on Washington weather in my talk yesterday for it is raining today, but I heard a robin singing this morning and the pussy willow buds are bursting and the frogs are croaking so it will not be many days until the sun will come smiling through and we will all be out in our gardens.

Following what I had to say yesterday about growing fruit for home use I want to remind you folks who have bearing orchards or even a few fruit trees about your homes that there are certain things that must be attended to if you may hope for any good fruit. For example there is the matter of pruning which should be attended to before the growth starts. Bearing apple trees may not require much pruning except perhaps to thin out the centers a little and head back any long branches also to remove water sprouts from the centers of the trees. Pear trees should only have the sprouts removed from their trunks and dead wood removed. Cherries and plums require merely a little thinning if anything at all but peaches require rather heavy thinning of the branches and especially last years growth in order to prevent the setting of more peaches than the tree can carry.

It is futile to attempt to grow good fruit for either home use or for the market without being prepared to carry out the necessary spray schedule for the control of diseases and insects. The spray schedule varies in the different parts of the country but includes the winter or dormant sprays for the control of scale insects, this to be followed by a definite schedule of spring and summer sprays. Your county agricultural agent is the man to see about this spray schedule and the materials to be used. The first of these sprays should go on your apple trees just as the buds show the first signs of pink, but your county agent will tell you about that.

Now there is another way that you can help your apple, peach, plum and cherry trees get off to a good start this spring, and that is by giving them a little readily available nitrogen before the buds start. Nitrate of soda and sulphate of ammonia are most commonly used for this purpose and the amount will vary from 2 or 3 pounds for an apple tree that is less than ten years old up to 8 or 10 pounds for a large tree that is 20 to 30 years old. Peach, plum and cherry trees are usually given 2 1/2 or 3 pounds per tree, but never apply any of this nitrate to your pear trees because it has a tendency to cause them to blight. The nitrate salt can be secured from the fertilizer dealers and should be scattered broadcast under the trees and extending about three feet beyond the tips of the branches where the feeding rootlets are located. It should be

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put on about two weeks before the trees blossom. The first light shower, or even a heavy dew, will dissolve the nitrate and it will go into the soil where it will be pumped into the tree along with the first flow of sap. The result will be a stronger and better set of fruit and a fine, well colored lot of leaves on the trees later.

A little nitrate of soda or sulphate of ammonia applied to your strawberry bed and along the rows of raspberries, blackberries or dewberries will hasten their growth in the spring but be careful that you do not put on too much and avoid allowing any lumps to fall or remain near the base of the plants. These nitrate salts are so strong that they are liable to burn the plants if too much is applied.

So much for the fruit garden and now for a few suggestions about the flower garden. The pruning and spring fertilizing of your roses is important right now for many of you. Roses require pruning and the main pruning should be given before growth starts. In case any of you northern folks have your roses put up in straw or other protection from the cold I would advise you to go a little slowly about taking the covering off. Examine the plants every few days and remove the cover about the time the buds begin to swell. Bush roses should be cut back rather severely if you want long stems and large flowers. In case you want a lot of flowers for outdoor effect then I should not prune so closely. I cut my bush roses to within about 8 or 10 inches of the ground each spring so as to get a new growth and roses that are suitable for cutting. All dead or winterkilled wood should of course be removed. It pays to have the pruning shears sharp so that you can make clean cuts and not crush or bruise the stems. Just as soon as the roses are pruned they should be given a thorough spraying with bordeaux mixture or if there are any scale insects on the stems they should be sprayed with lime-sulphur solution before the buds start. You folks who are located in the south where the roses are already in leaf and bloom are safe in using the bordeaux mixture but not the lime-sulphur.

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